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SUBJECT: POPE DISMISSES STAFFERS INVOLVED IN HOLOCAUST DENIER
SCANDAL

REF: A. VATICAN 28
[1](#)B. VATICAN 37

[1](#)1. (SBU) On July 8, the Pope quietly let go the Vatican personnel who had this spring recommended the restoration of communion with a break-away Catholic movement that included a Holocaust-denying bishop. Although the Pope clarified that he was not aware of Bishop Williamson's views at the time of his decision, the resulting fracas caused short-term damage to the Church's relations with Jews (ref A). It also led to considerable public criticism of the Vatican's antiquated social communications strategy (ref b). The streamlining of the so-called "Ecclesia Dei" (Church of God) Commission - which had recommended lifting the movement's excommunication -- removed its two most senior officials, Colombian Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos and his deputy, Luxembourg Monsignor Camille Perl.

[1](#)2. (U) The Vatican's doctrinal czar, U.S. Cardinal William Levada, will now oversee the full rehabilitation of members of traditionalist Catholic break-away movement, the Fraternity of St. Pius X. (Note: While no longer excommunicated, the traditionalist group's bishops and clergy are still not authorized to exercise their ministry, for example, by ordaining other priests.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) Comment: While some Vatican watchers saw the move as a rebuke for the former members of the Commission, in fact Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos, who recently turned 80, was required to retire at this age anyway. Indeed, some critics argued that he prematurely advocated lifting the excommunication of the Pius X Society in the spring so that - after years of negotiating with the sect - it could happen on his watch. By waiting a few months until Castrillon Hoyos reached mandatory retirement age to announce the reorganization, the Pope spared him some embarrassment. The reshuffling of the personnel and responsibilities is therefore more a re-think by the Pope about the process of bringing errant members back into the Catholic fold. He has now put dealing with the traditionalists in the

hands of someone he trusts implicitly, Cardinal Levada, who got his current job as one of the pontiff's first appointments in [1](#)2005. And by announcing the decision the day after the release of his long-awaiting social encyclical and on the first day on the G8 summit in Italy, the Vatican demonstrated that it learned at least one lesson from the Fraternity of St. Pius X scandal: how to bury a story. End comment.

NOYES

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